



AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Aggressive Patient Behaviour in Australian General Practice

General Practice survey (to be completed by one practice representative, i.e. practice manager, practice nurse, receptionist, or allied health staff)

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The Department of Health and Ageing has commissioned the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) to conduct this study investigating aggressive patient behaviour in Australian general practice.

This study will help gain a better understanding of the extent to which aggressive patient behaviour is an issue for those working in Australian general practices, and will:

- Measure the incidence of aggressive behaviour in general practice
- Assess the attitudes of practice staff towards aggression.

You have been invited to complete this survey as a representative for this practice on behalf of the other staff at this practice

- You will need to complete this survey with input from other staff or by checking an incident register.

This survey should take approximately **15 – 20 minutes**.

Please provide a response by **12th March 2010**.

Should you feel upset or disturbed due to recalling aggressive behaviour, you can contact:

- GP support program, RACGP, 1300 366 789 <http://www.racgp.org.au/gpsupport>
- Lifeline 13 11 14 <http://www.lifeline.org.au>
- Assoc Prof Rhian Parker, (02) 6125 7838 rhian.parker@anu.edu.au

Participation in this research is voluntary and your consent is implied through completion of the survey. All information gathered in the process of this survey will be treated in the strictest of confidence. You will remain anonymous.

The data from this survey will be kept and stored securely by the Primary Investigator for this project, Assoc Prof Rhian Parker from APHCRI.

This research has received ethics approval from the Australian National University. If you have any concerns about the way the research was conducted please click here Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au.

Practice Demographics

Q1. How many of the following staff work at this practice?

Please indicate number in the box

- General practitioners
 - Practice managers
 - Practice nurses
 - Receptionists
 - Allied health professionals
 - Other, please specify _____
-

Q2. And how many are female?

Please indicate number in the box

- General practitioners
 - Practice managers
 - Practice nurses
 - Receptionists
 - Allied health professionals
 - Other, please specify _____
-

Q3. And how many work **full time** at this practice (30 hours or more per week)

Please indicate number in the box

- General practitioners
 - Practice managers
 - Practice nurses
 - Receptionists
 - Allied health professionals
 - Other, please specify _____
-

Q4. What is the postcode of this practice?

This information will not be used to identify your practice. We only need this information to work out in which state your practice is located, and whether your practice is in a metropolitan or regional area.

Demographics continued

Q5. What division of general practice is your practice located in?

Q6. Is this practice a:

Please select only one option.

- Sole general practitioner – a practice with only one GP
 - Group practice – a ‘traditional’ practice owned by the GPs who work in the practice
 - Corporate practice – a practice that is owned by an individual or organisation other than the GPs who work at the practice
 - Other, please specify: _____
-

Q7. Does your practice provide any of the following services:

Please tick all that apply:

- Home visits **during** business hours
 - Home visits **after** business hours
 - After hours consultations in the practice on **weekdays**
 - After hours consultations in the practice on **weekends**
 - None of the above
-

Types of aggressive patient behaviour

This section is about types of aggressive patient behaviour directed towards staff at this practice. For this survey, the term 'aggressive patient behaviour' includes:

- **Verbal Aggression**
 - Verbal abuse or threats
- **Physical Aggression**
 - Property damage or theft
 - Stalking
 - Physical assault
 - Sexual harassment
 - Sexual assault

Verbal Aggression

These questions are about verbal aggression by patients or associated with patients.

In this survey, verbal aggression means verbal abuse or threats, for example when a patient or somebody associated with the patient **swears, threatens to harm or uses obscene gestures** to offend practice staff.

Verbal aggression includes threats or abuse over the phone.

Q8. In the last 12 months, how many times have staff at this practice been subject to verbal abuse or threats by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q8 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q11

Q9. Overall, how much of this verbal abuse or threats comes from males, how much from females?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Females	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Q10. Overall, how much of this verbal abuse or threats comes from patients, how much from people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
People associated with patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Physical Aggression

This next section is about physical aggression from patients or people associated with patients at this practice.

These questions will ask about instances of the different types of physical aggression over the **last 12 months**.

- Property damage or theft
- Stalking
- Physical assault
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault

Property damage or theft

These questions are about damage to, or theft of, property belonging to the practice or to practice staff.

Property damage or theft includes when a patient or somebody associated with a patient:

- Steals or damages personal property of practice staff, including cars
- Steals or damages medical or office equipment, supplies, and office furnishings

Attempted theft or damage of the above items and theft from and damage to practice staff's homes is also included.

Q11. In the last 12 months, how often were staff at this practice subject to property damage or theft by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q11 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q14

Q12. Overall, how much of this property damage or theft was done by males, how much by females?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Females	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Q13. Overall, how much of this property damage or theft was done by patients, how much by people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
People associated with patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Stalking

These questions are about stalking of practice staff by a patient or person associated with a patient.

Stalking includes any unwanted and intrusive attention by patients or people associated with patients towards practice staff. For this survey, stalking includes when a patient or person associated with a patient **purposely follows a staff member** to or from their home or place of work.

Q14. In the last 12 months, how many times were staff at this practice subject to stalking by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q14 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q17

Q15. Overall, how much of this stalking was done by males, how much by females?
 Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males %

Females %

Total 100%

Q16. Overall, how much of this stalking was done by patients, how much by people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients %

People associated with patients %

Total 100%

Physical assault

These questions are about the physical assault of practice staff by patients or people associated with patients. For this survey, physical assault includes when a patient or person associated with a patient:

- Grabs pushes, hits, kicks or slaps a practice staff member
- The use of a weapon or other object with the intent of intimidation or causing bodily harm to a practice staff member

Q17. In the last 12 months, how many times were staff at this practice subject to physical assault by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q17 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q20

Q18. Overall, what percentage of these physical attacks were by males, what percentage by females?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males %

Females %

Total 100%

Q19. Overall, what percentage of these physical attacks were by patients, what percentage by people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients %

People associated with patients %

Total 100%

Sexual harassment

These questions are about the sexual harassment of practice staff by patients or people associated with patients. For this survey, sexual harassment includes any time when a patient or someone associated with the patient initiates:

- Sexual propositions or unwelcome sexual attention
- Humiliating or offensive jokes and remarks with sexual overtones
- Suggestive looks or physical gestures
- Requests for inappropriate or invasive physical examinations
- Pressure for dates
- Aggressive brushing, touching, or grabbing **excluding** the genital or breast area

Q20. In the last 12 months, how many times were staff at this practice subject to sexual harassment by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q20 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q23

Q21. Overall, how much of this sexual harassment was from males, how much from females?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Females	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Q22. Overall, how much of this sexual harassment was from patients, how much from people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
People associated with patients	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Total	100%

Sexual assault

These questions are about the sexual assault of practice staff by patients or people associated with patients. For this survey, sexual assault is any forced sexual act, rape or indecent assault

Q23. In the last 12 months, how many times were staff at this practice subject to sexual assault by a patient or someone associated with a patient?

	Daily	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Once every six months	Once in the last 12 months	Not in the last 12 months	Never	Don't know
Practice managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receptionists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allied health professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF ALL ITEMS AT Q23 = NEVER OR DON'T KNOW, GO TO Q27

Q24. Overall, what percentage of this sexual assault was by males, what percentage by females?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for males and females

Males %

Females %

Total 100%

Q25. Overall, what percentage of this sexual assault was by patients, what percentage by people associated with patients?

Please estimate the percentage of instances for patients and people associated with patients

Patients %

People associated with patients %

Total 100%

Q26. In the last 12 months, have staff at this practice experienced any other forms of patient aggression?

(Apart from the types of aggression listed in the previous questions) Please describe below.

Trends

Q27. Are there any times of the day or week when staff are at particular risk of aggressive patient behaviour?

Please tick all that apply

- When the practice first opens
- Mornings after opening time
- Lunch times
- Afternoons
- When the practice is closing
- After hours
- Saturday mornings
- After the practice has closed on weekends
- None of the above

Q28. Are there any other times when staff are at particular risk of aggressive patient behaviour?

- When the practice has limited numbers of staff on
- During home visits
- After closing when you are walking to your car, public transport or walking home
- None of the above
- Other, please specify: _____

Q29. In the **last 12 months**, has aggressive patient behaviour increased, decreased or stayed the same at **this practice**?

If the type of aggressive behaviour has never occurred at the practice, please tick 'stayed the same'

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	Don't know
Verbal abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property damage or theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stalking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impacts of aggressive patient behaviour

Q30. In the **last 12 months**, has **verbal aggression** by patients or people associated with patients resulted in ...

Please provide one response for each item

	Yes	No	Don't know
Staff distress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to have time off	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to have counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to reduce their hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changed practice opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced services (such as home visits)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff resignation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to procedures/ policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q31. In the **last 12 months**, has **physical aggression** by patients or people associated with patients resulted in ...

Please provide one response for each item

	Yes	No	Don't know
Staff distress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to have time off	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to have counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The need for staff to reduce their hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changed practice opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced services (such as home visits)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff resignation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to procedures/ policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32. Has patient aggression had any other impacts on staff's wellbeing and capacity to provide services?

Please describe below.

The research team at the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute
 sincerely thanks you for your time and effort